

Goldwater

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(Washington Bureau of The Sun)

Washington, Jan. 23—Senator Goldwater (R., Ariz.) called today for an Armed Services Committee investigation of the Bay of Pigs disaster, charging that President Kennedy has never given the American people "a true account of what had been planned and what actually happened."

The conservative senator also continued his attack on the statement of Robert F. Kennedy, Attorney General, that the United States had not planned or promised air cover for the anti-Castro Cubans who launched their ill-fated invasion in April, 1961.

"For 21 months the people of the United States have been led to believe that the United States had promised the Cuban invading force air cover and naval support," Goldwater told the Senate.

"Defies Belief"

"... Now after all this time we get from the Attorney General an account which defies belief and runs counter to everything the American people had been led to believe and contradicts the understanding of almost every man engaged in the abortive invasion attempt."

Senator Russell (D., Ga.), chairman of the Armed Services Committee, took an "open mind" position in the controversy while indirectly chiding both Goldwater and the Attorney General.

In a reference to Goldwater's demand for an investigation, Russell said it is not the function of his committee "to solve political issues."

And in regard to Robert Kennedy's statements, the Georgia senator said he found it difficult to understand what the Attorney General had to do with the invasion in an official capacity—except if he is a brother of the President.

Russell said there was "a question" that the anti-Castro invaders thought they had assurances of air cover.

The real issue, he suggested, was whether this protection was to be provided by regular United States forces or whether it was to be a "CIA cover" of the type that supplied the bombing raid on Havana just before the invasion.

Russell said he saw no real purpose in "re-laudering" the invasion—though "I'll confess I never seemed very keen

He commented that Goldwater could get all the information he wants when Robert S. McNamara, Secretary of Defense, and members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff testify at regular military posture hearings before the Armed Services Committee.

Goldwater, however, indicated this might not satisfy him because he wants to question men who held top positions at the time of the invasion—not those in office now.

He specifically mentioned Allen W. Dulles, former director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Lyman L. Lemnitzer, former chairman of the joint chiefs who is now commander of NATO, and Gen. Thomas White, former Air Force chief of staff.

"Had Own Planes"

Goldwater insisted that he had not intended to reopen the Bay of Pigs controversy until the Attorney General publicly denied there had been any promise of air cover.

The Attorney General's assertions were made in a story published last weekend by the Miami Herald.

They came a short time after Jose A. Perez San Roman, commander of the 2506th Brigade in the Bay of Pigs invasion, said that he had never been promised air cover.

"We had our own planes but they were knocked out," the Cuban declared on January 11, after presenting a medal to the Attorney General.

The White House on that day declined direct comment on the Perez statement but said the Kennedy Administration had not promised air cover.

In his speech to the Senate today, Goldwater said the Attorney General's "highly questionable account" of the invasion cast doubt on the ability of the American military establishment.

Asserting that no trained military man could possibly think of launching an invasion with only 1,500 men, the Arizona senator said he wanted to know "just how much inexperienced civilian officials are wielding in military matters which affect the security of the United States."

Senator Morse (D. Ore.) chairman of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Latin America, took the floor immediately to challenge Goldwater.

He said senators should read secret testimony taken by his subcommittee soon after the invasion before they make "partial speeches involving the foreign policy interests of the Republic."

"Most Inconclusive"

Goldwater quickly replied that he had read the subcommittee record and that the testimony was the "most inconclusive" he had ever seen.

Morse retorted that he would prefer to have "the jury of the Senate" make its own judgment on testimony that was "clear and unequivocal."

While Goldwater and Morse sniped across party lines, there was evidence of a division within Republican ranks.

Yesterday, Senator Dirksen (R., Ill.), the minority leader, said the Republican Policy Committee had given him authority to determine whether the GOP group itself should make an investigation.

Goldwater Not Present

Goldwater, when asked about this proposal today, said he had not attended the policy committee meeting.

He added that he did not see how the Republicans could make an adequate investigation on their own.

It would be better, the conservative leader contended, if the Armed Services Committee made the probe since it would have the power to call witnesses and receive secret data.

The Attorney General's office, meanwhile, declined comment on Goldwater's charges or the prospect of a senate investigation.

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